The Marker Lamp

Volume 53 **Number 4** **Fall 2007**

Union Pacific 844 heading north from Oklahoma just south of Wellington, Kansas. The sound of a steam whistle caught LSR member Tracy Mitchell by surprise and he spent a few days in Kansas.
Photo by Tracy Mitchell, MMR

Make plans for Houston in '08 June 18-22

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President's Message

by Jerry Schoenberg, MMR

Hi All,

Another facet of our hobby heard from! As you know, I am always amazed with the many areas of our hobby that we participate in, and the sharing of those that are in them. This is again the case with "Live Steam".

Yes, this group is, and must be, an exclusive group. The large investments of the property owners, the equipment costs, and the possible liability make this a must. I have found, however, that if you are willing to help, show a real interest, and don't mind the work activity, you can get an invite to a "Live Steam Meet". At a recent visit to a very large track, the owner stated, "I can never have too many engines, and I never have too many crews".

The title "Live Steam" is actually a misnomer. In the popular ½ inch scale, there are many more diesels than steam locomotives. It is not unusual, however, to have 5 to 8 steam engines, of all wheel arrangements, show up at a gathering. Diesel locomotives come in a very wide variety. One can admire everything from very large and modern 8 axle versions to early diesel, switchers and box cabs. They are built from scratch, kits, kit bashing, and outright purchase. These locomotives are powered by diesel electric, gas electric, gas or diesel hydraulic or battery electric. Controls include panels, tethered and radio. Investments range from A-B-B-A F unit sets to home made box cabs.

"Live Steam" meets take on two types of activity. Some include realistic operation with lots of cars and industries. The majority are set up to run engines and trains. You make up your train in the yard and go out on the main line to "meet" other trains. It is quickly apparent that you must understand the signal system used. Like the prototype, the trains are heavy, and the brakes are limited. If you are out in the woods, you don't want to get surprised by an oncoming headlight.

It is easy to differentiate two different types of engineers at a track. The steamers tend to hang out together, wear heat resistant gloves, and are usually covered with soot and cinders. The diesel engineers are out running on the railroad before the steamers get done lubing and cleaning. It is usually close to noon before the steam engines have enough boiler pressure. The steam owners are more into running the engines, and some engineers really don't care if they pull any cars. The diesel guys are more into operating as a prototype. All are very proud of their power and want to share it and show it off. I can't tell you what a thrill (and a little intimidating) it is to run a friend's locomotive. If you can imagine, on one occasion a large Pacific locomotive stopped by me, and the owner (a stranger) called me over and offered me a ride. When I looked for a place to sit, he said, "No, you are going to run it". After a fast lesson, I did!

The rolling stock is very realistic. Again, cars are scratch built, kits, kit bashed or purchased ready to run. There are many similarities to HO. Instead of decals, vinyl lettering is popular. You can find caboose interiors, cattle in the stock cars, loads in the box cars and real ballast in the ballast hoppers. Of course, like HO, there is not one type of coupler and some work better than others.

An Operation Meet is a real hoot! Although, I found the learning curve to be pretty steep, there is plenty of help and advice on a train. The crew normally is comprised of an engineer, a conductor, a front brakeman and a rear brakeman. Things like flaging your train, chocking wheels and watching your fingers when coupling are essential. A simplified version of car cards is the preferred car forwarding program. Night operation in the woods is another whole different experience.

Well, if you ever get an invitation, and you don't mind a little activity, my advice is to check out "Live Steam". If you are in the Houston area or want to travel there, there are occasional meets open to the public at the Houston Area Live Steamers. Yes, I have been bit by this activity and have purchased a used cabin car. For those that don't know what a PRR cabin car is, it is similar to a caboose, but painted differently.

View from the Spar Pole

By Chuck Lind, MMR

Some of you may have noticed some words floating around on the last cover of the *Marker Lamp*. Much to my surprise, I saw them when my copy was delivered. After contacting the printer he couldn't figure out how they got there since they were not on the copy sent to him, but were from the Fall 2005 issue. Somehow those digital deamons just appeared.

After the LSR Convention, Laurie and I took a trip to the National Narrow Gauge Convention. This year it was held in Portland, Maine and since neither one of us had been in this area we wanted to visit the sites. If you have never made it to the Cog Railroad on Mt. Washington, it is worth the trip. We arrived early and watched the action of these little engines moving around the yard pushing their coach (yes, pushing, no coupler) getting ready for the trip. The average grade is 24%, but in one place goes to about 33%. Try standing and walking through the car. The weather on top was beautiful, just slightly cooler than at the base, which is unusual since some of the worst weather recorded has been from the top. Record consisent wind of 240 mph was measured from the top until the wind gauge took flight after 15 minutes.

From there we made our way to the convention and a chance to ride the 2 foot gauge railroads. Many of us referred to these as the old man gauge. Since the wheels are only 12" to 14" you don't have to step very high to enter the cars. We visited the museums and had a couple of excellent train rides behind the little Forney engines. It was a learning experience for me with the 2' gauge, I can see how people can get hooked on this area to model.

Another of the highlights was the boat trip and lobster bake. You line up and they place sweet corn, boiled potato and this large lobster stairing back at you on your plate. We were lucky to have at our table someone that knew what to do, so we followed the instructions of Al and Ginny Boos in finding the meat and how to get it out of the shell. I don't know how Al managed to eat two of them.

Watch This Space!!!

Here's where you'll find all the information about what's being planned for the 2008 LSR convention in Houston, "**The IRON HORSE 8**". All the latest info and updates will also be available on the LSR website at http://www.lonestarregion.com/convention.html.

June 18 – 22, 2008! Keep these dates open, because we're planning five great days of trains and socializing. From the opening activities on Wednesday afternoon until the Iron Horse rides into the sunset on Sunday morning, you'll have all the railroading fun you could possibly want.

The convention will be at the Holiday Inn Houston Southwest, near the intersection of Hwy 59 South and Beltway 8. For those of you who were at the "04 convention, it'll be like coming home! And we've arranged a great room rate – just $75 per night.

As always, one of the top attractions in the Houston area is our wide selection of outstanding home railroads. We'll have three days of drive-yourself-tours to layouts from N scale to G, narrow gauge, standard gauge, large, small, desert, mountain, outdoor… well, you name it – you'll see it! Plus we're bringing back the very popular Super Tour, an all-day Saturday bus excursion, lunch included, to some of the best layouts we have to offer. And if you can't stand just watching the trains, you'll also have the chance to operate on a number of these layouts.

If, heaven forbid, you get tired of the little trains, we've got a few big ones for you to look at. Rescar Channelview (railcar repair), Union Tank Sheldon (tank car manufacturing), the Metro Rail Barn (Metro railcar maintenance), the Port of Houston boat tour (ship channel side of rail shippers) and the Union Pacific Training center at Lloyd yard (locomotive simulator) all are on the short list for potential Prototype Tours.

How about an evening of BBQ, socializing and riding behind an assortment of steam and diesel engines? Included in your registration will be a trip to Zube Park and the huge Houston Area Live Steamers layout. You'll have time to ride the trains, hang around the steaming bays, or just kick back, relax and chat with friends.

Non-Rails, you've got a trip to Old Town Spring with its vast array of shops – antiques, collectibles, souvenirs, snack and specialty food shops, all topped off with a luncheon at Puffabelly's, a unique restaurant housed in an old train station.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, er… the convention hotel… activities abound!

Clinics, CLINICS, **CLINICS!**

Rails, if there's anything you always wanted to know about railroading, but were afraid to ask, well – you won't need to; we'll have it! The clinic program kicks off Wednesday evening and runs through Saturday, so you'll have lots of time to pick your favorite topic.

And be sure to check out the Progressive Clinic in the Display Room. Tracy Mitchell, MMR and a cast of thousands – well, maybe a dozen – will be taking a switching layout from bare bones to a finished product, right before your eyes! Stand back and watch them sweat and toil, or better yet – get right in there and join the fun! This is definitely a hands-on clinic!

Non-Rails, be sure to come to the Wednesday evening social get-together and preview of upcoming activities. You can look forward to at least a half-dozen craft clinics on a wide variety of topics, and who knows, we might even sneak in a surprise event!

Along with the Progressive Clinic, the Display Room will host other activities including the Switching Contest, the Company Store, Jim Long's LSR Historical Display, and other things that we don't even know about yet!

Then move a bit further down the hall and check out the Contest room. Chuck Lind has a new and improved contest for 2008; you'll definitely want to participate in this one.

Last, but certainly not least, at the end of the hall you'll find the Silent Auction and treasures galore!

The LSR Awards Banquet is Saturday night; we've been fortunate to get as our featured speaker Brian Marsh, CEO of Overland Models. Some of you heard his excellent presentation at the George Bush Library a while back; we're all looking forward to having Brian in Houston next year.

That's the preview of "**The IRON HORSE 8**" convention. Keep checking the LSR website at http://www.lonestarregion.com/convention.html for all the latest details, and look for our big Convention spread, complete with registration forms and all the details, in the Winter *Marker Lamp*.

See you in Houston in '08!

Loren Neufeld, MMR
Convention Chairman - **The IRON HORSE 8**

Mastering Modeling - Staining Wood

By Tracy Mitchell and Terry "The Canadian" Mitchell MMR's

In this installment we are going to talk about the single most important aspect of working with wood... That is staining/colouring the wood. Whether you pre-stain the wood to give it that aged look or are colouring the wood for its final colour, stain is the way to go... not paint. Paint has a tendency to go on way too thick, filling the details such as grain and nail holes in the process. You spend all the time and trouble putting the grain and nail holes into the wood, so why cover them up.

A lot has been mentioned surrounding contests and about how easy it is to stain wood compared to "painting" other mediums [styrene]. Let this be known, those that think all you need to do to have "Life Like" wood is dab on one colour, are mistaken. The number one rule we can give you is "Nature is not Monotone" and neither should your wooden models be. In order to achieve realistic looking coloured wood you need several shades of pigment. There are several ways to do this. In fact we use a combination of all these techniques to achieve the colour we want on the final product.

Pre-stain is what you want the undercoat of the wood to be. All wood should be pre-stained prior to assembly whether you are scratchbuilding, using a craftsmen kit or even a laser cut wood kit. Probably the most important step of all; is to think of what the final colour the model will be before you start the model. Pre-staining makes sure that when the glue is applied, no new wood will show through the glue.

What follows are the stains we use to pre-stain the wood and also what we use for the final colour of the wood. So lets get to it shall we…The first stain is our favourite and is the one we use the most often.

Alcohol and India Ink Stain

The formula for the stain is 1 teaspoon to a pint of rubbing alcohol. [Isopropyl] Start with a teaspoon and add a few drops at a time until you get the colour you want. Check it often on a scrap piece of wood. The shade we like the best is just under 2 teaspoons, **but do not start with 2 teaspoons**. If you do, you will have a darker stain than you need and you will wind up with a gallon of stain trying to dilute it.

You can also buy India Ink in several brands and colours. The brand we prefer is Higgins. The two other colours we use, besides black, are brown and brick red. By mixing the brown ink into the alcohol, you can get the reddish brown Colorado colour that we NGers strive for. The Brick Red is more of an oxide colour and makes a great Redwood colour.

Make sure you use alcohol that is at least 70% [91 is better, 100% can be found at some home stores by the gallon. Stay away from the 50%, it is too weak and will evaporate leaving you with just water. Some modelers use Ammonia instead of Alcohol. They like it because the evaporation is cut down significantly. The smell is what most modelers don't like about it. Lind Wickersham from Tulsa is who taught us this trick.

One thing that you might consider trying; instead of "using a brush to apply the India Ink/Alcohol mixture (and this may require some fellows to test their masculinity) is to find yourself one of the "pump" hair spray bottles [lacquer or alcohol based hair spray - doesn't even have to be for men!] to apply your weathering mixture. Dump out the liquid hair spray and pour in your mixture. The sprayer "atomizer" breaks up the mixture molecules to a fine mist. This reduces your "Blotchiness" by applying it in coats or applications. Apply a coat and let dry. Apply another coat and let dry, and so on until you like the look.

We actually follow this procedure for the independent components of a model, and again when the model is assembled. Obviously, we do NOT have the solution "full" strength. [One teaspoon of India Ink is as strong as this should be.]

Leather Dye and Alcohol

This is the type of stain that Chuck Lind uses the most. The brand name for the dye is FIEBING'S Leather Dye and can be purchased from an outfit online at www.fiebings.com Here's what they advertise: Leather Dye, The most recognized penetrating, alcohol-based leather dye in the world. Dries uniformly and mixes easily to create interesting middle tones. Manufactured in a variety of colours and two types of Blacks. Be advised **do not** purchase Black unless you want a Blue/Purple tint. The true Black color is USMC Black [this does not stand for the Marine Corp, but was the initials of the old company].

Here is Chuck's technique: Pour denatured (**not rubbing**) alcohol into a pint bottle and add the shoe dye with a dropper. Add a few drops at a time and shaking it up, then test with a piece of strip wood (let it dry completely) and check the color. Mix more than one color to get the effect you want. Since you mix a pint at a time it will last forever. Chuck uses the following colors USMC Black, Light Tan, Dark Tan Buckskin. Mix and match the various colors with the alcohol. (Be careful when mixing the colors, it takes lots of alcohol to thin it back down. You might end up with enough to supply all your friends). When you get the shade you want, tape a sample piece of strip wood on the bottle for reference.

Sweet and Sour

Sweet and Sour weathering came from Jim Wild and Dwayne Easterling, Al Boos was who showed it to us the first time. To get the real effect of the Sweet and Sour, you need to bake the soaked wood in an oven. By changing the temp and time you get wonderful colours from greys and blacks to the reddish tints found in Colorado. Here is the formula for the Sweet and Sour baking time and temp. (Al says it is best to do this when the wife is gone.)

Start with one large ball of 0000 steel wool rusted to a fine powder. (Steel wool is convenient, but if you happen to have a rusty old Ford Maverick in your driveway, that'll work too!) We use salt water and TX sun to cure. After the water has evaporated, crush the steel wool and sift it with a strainer to get the finest powder you can. This might take 3 times of soaking the wool in salt water, before it is all dissolved. Vinegar will break down the steel wool too, so try that as well. (The rust powder left over makes a dandy weathering tool for rusty metal look. Use it in ways similar the weathering chalks, or sift it on a recently sprayed model for realistic granular rust patterns.) The rust from that one steel wool ball goes into one quart of white vinegar [not Apple Cider]. Soak the wood in the vinegar solution for at least 20 minutes. Also stir the wood several times to make sure all sides are soaked thoroughly. Throw the wood on an old baking sheet. This is important - not one your

wife bakes with, go to a garage sale and by the cheapest, dirtiest most beat up one you can find.

Pop in the oven and bake at 180 until dry for Light Browns and Greys; 225 until dry for Medium Browns and Darker Greys; 250 for 30 minutes for Black, Dark Greys, Yellowish Grey

The reason we don't use Sweet and Sour anymore is because of all the prep work required. There are to many variables that can mess up the wood. All these things can contribute to a "Wrong" Colour"…. The brand of Vinegar, the steel wool, the rust powder might not be fully rusted, the oven, how well the solution is mixed, and even the pan you cook it on, are all factors to be considered.

Ehlers' Weathering Goop

This was shown to us by Kenneth Ehlers. He stains his wood by mixing tube acrylics and rubbing alcohol. Any brand of tube acrylic, but the most common brand is Liquitex. The colours are Mars Black, Raw Umber, a little red, yellow, and white won't hurt either. Start with a one or two inch squirt into roughly a pint of alcohol. Add some marbles or pebbles and shake well. Even with the marbles in the bottle, the paint won't totally dissolve. There will be small globs of paint at the bottom. Shake the bottle and then dip the wood into the container and pull the wood out. The globs will stick to the wood. Wipe off with an old T Shirt. This method gives you wonderful streaks. Be forewarned this is a messy method, but the results are striking and very effective. This stain is as close to the colour of natural wood you find in the "High Country". One other thing, make sure you allow the alcohol to evaporate completely before using the wood.

Rit Fabric Dye

The Rit Dye and denatured alcohol is another way to stain wood with good results. You can use either the powder or the liquid dye. Either works well. Rit Dye is usually used for dyeing fabric, but it will also work for staining wood. Rit Dye can be bought at any grocery store or craft store. It comes in a wide assortment of colours. The black, brown, tangerine, and grey colours are the four that we use the most. This can be used as a pre-stain or for the final colour. To mix, all you need to do is mix 2 tablespoons of the dye with about a pint of denatured alcohol, **not** rubbing alcohol. Dip the wood into the stain and let it set for about 20 seconds. Then you take it out and allow to air dry. Sometimes we have taken it out and in five seconds it will be dry to the touch (it usually takes less than ten minutes).

However, we wait at least an hour before using the stained wood. We use dark Brown and this is a good color for Creosote. In fact this is all we use it for. What we do is pour pre-cut ties into a Ziploc bag [gallon size] and then pour the stain into the bag Close the bag and then do the Hippy Hippy shake. Pour off the dye back into the storage container and then pour out the ties onto newspaper to dry. As stated above it should be dry to the touch in less than 10 minutes. This was taught to us by the late Ken Stanley and is by far the best color we found for treated ties.

Minwax Stain

Minwax is the brand name and is available in the US as well as in Canada. All the "Home Labyrinths" should carry it. Jacobean wood stain is a good choice of color. Sadly, Minwax discontinued their Driftwood stain. This is where you can really experiment with other shades of solvent based wood stains. Sometimes we dilute the color by adding the Natural stain. Other times we darken the effect by staining twice. Be very selective, this stuff goes along way when you are working with small amounts of lumber. This stuff was intended for 12" to the foot scale, not the scales we are used to working with.

Marker Pens

We have also started experimenting with paint markers and marking pens to paint strip wood with pretty good results. They are sold at art supply stores and come in a variety of colors. We prefer the brown tones like Ochre's, Sienna's, and Umbers. They are used like magic markers, just rub them down the strip wood and wipe off any access.

They are not widely available. Check out the really professional art supply stores. The discount craft like Hobby Lobby and Michael's stores sell them too, but do not have the variety of colors needed. Texas Art Supply in Houston carries a wide selection of pens. They also come in different tip thickness.

Also the Sharpie brand name of magic markers have come out in the last year with wood color stains in the pens. These work well also. Minwax also makes marking pens for touching up furniture. All of these work well. The problem with any of the marking pens is they don't last long. Even if you model in HO scale, you will go through a half dozen or so pens for even a modest size structure.

Using paint as a stain

This is the best method for staining wood for the final colour. Start out with solvent-based paint (brand doesn't matter). Dilute the paint with lacquer thinner. The ratio is around 10% paint and 90% thinner. You want the mixture thinner than spraying with an airbrush. You are after the paint/stain soaking into the wood rather than lying on top. Apply with an old T-shirt (not a paint brush). You want as few of brush strokes as possible. T-shirts reduce the brush strokes.

One of our favourite colours is Oxide Red. To achieve the colour, we take a jar of Floquil Oxide Red and pour about a quarter of the jar out into a larger jar then fill it with lacquer thinner at the 10% paint 90% thinner ratio. As the paint gets used, we add a different colour of "red" to the mix and more thinner. Right now this bottle is easily 10 years old and has Oxide Red, Tuscan, ATSF Mineral Red, Roof Brown, Box Car Red, Rust, Rail Brown, and just about any other "Oxide" colour you can think of. Between the pre-stain and this colour, no two of our cars come out exactly the same colour. Remember, Nature is NOT Monotone.

We have also used water-based paints for the stain on some of our newer models with success. All we can say is we hope they keep making solvent-based paints. The water base paint is fine, just different to use. We use the cheap paint found in craft stores and Wal-Mart. The brand names are Ceramcoat, Apple Barrel, Folk Art, etc. Do not thin the paint with water. It tends to raise the grain of the wood too much. Dilute it with car window washing fluid, the good stuff sold at Auto supply stores (**do not** use Windex, it has too much ammonia).

These are all the techniques we have used for staining. We are positive there are countless more that we don't know about. At this time we really don't need another method. We hope you will give one or more of these methods a try. "Remember nature is not monotone."

Back to modeling now.

Up The Track

By Bill Dryden

Here is the list of the upcoming railroad events that I am aware of within the LSR. I provide all the information YOU send me or I can glean for these events. Further information is available through the NMRA Scale Rails and various trade magazines. Please send any and all information about upcoming events or activities in your area, club, etc., to me via email at bdr149@airmail.net. Also, note that all show times and dates are at the discretion of the sponsoring organization and are subject to change.

The upcoming events:

LSR Convention:

Lone Star Region 57th Annual Convention

Houston

June 18-22, 2008 Details to follow.

Recurring events and meetings:

DFW Area Lionel Modular Group Meeting

Plano

The DFW Lionel Modular Group meets the second Monday of the month at 6:45 PM in the Gladys Harrington Library, 1501 East 18th St., Plano, TX. For more information call (972) 422-4330.

LSR Northeast Texas (NET), Division 3 Monthly Meeting

Garland

Nicholson Memorial Library, 625 Austin St., Garland, TX Third Saturday of each month. For more information contact Duane Richardson (duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com) or check the Division 3 Page on the LSR website.

Houston Area Live Steamers

Hockley

Come enjoy free train rides on our 7,500 feet of 7½-inch gauge track. Public run days are the 3rd Saturday of the month March thru November. US Hwy 290 and Roberts Road. Times are 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We can always open special days for Model Railroaders. For more info go to www.hals.org or contact Peter Bryan at peterb@ppdq.net.

North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs Meeting

Irving

The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs (NTC) meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Visit the NTC website www.dfwtrainshows.com for more information about the NTC, its meeting site or its member clubs. All model railroaders welcome.

Events and Shows:

November 2007

3rd - 4th **Texas & Pacific Depot and Museum Train Show and Extravaganza**
Sat. 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sun. 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Adults $5, Children 12 and Under Free
Marshall Civic Center; US 59 2 miles north of IH 20, Marshall
Contact: (903) 938-9495

3rd - 4th **The Great Train Expo**
TBA
Reliant Park; Houston

10th – 11th **Fort Worth Area Train Show** (North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs)
Sat. 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sun. 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Adults $7, Children 12 and Under Free
Amon Carter Hall/Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3401 W Lancaster Ave., Ft. Worth, TX.
Website: www.dfwtrainshows.com

10th – 11th **Model Train Festival**
Sat. and Sun. 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Texas City Museum and Showboat Pavilion; 400 Blk 6th St. North, Texas City, TX.
Contact: (409) 643-5799

17th - 18th **3rd Annual North Louisiana Train Show**
Sat. 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Sun. 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Adults $7, Children 12 and Under Free
Louisiana National Guard Armory, Stoner Avenue, Shreveport, LA.
Contact: www.northlouisianatrainshow.org

December 2007

8th - 9th **Greenville Holiday Train and Collectable Show**
Sat. 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sun. 12:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Adults $4, Children 6-18 $2, Under 6 Free
Greenville Railroad Museum, 3102 Lee St., Greenville, TX.
Contact: (903) 455-4935

January 2008

19th – 20th **Dallas Area Train Show** (North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs)
Sat. 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sun. 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Adults $7, Children 12 and Under Free
Plano Centre, 2000 East Spring Creek Pkwy., Plano, TX.
Contact: www.dfwtrainshows.com

February 2008

23rd – 24th **Longview Model Train Show**
Sat. 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Sun. 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Adults $6, Children 12 and Under Free
Longview Exhibit Building. Longview Fairgrounds, off Hwy 31 on Jaycee Drive
Contact: Homer Fleischer. P.O. Box 6704, Longview, TX 75608. (903) 753-9512

Union Pacific 844 is steaming across Kansas just south of Wellington.

At the Great Plains Train Train Museum in Wichita, Kansas. If you look closely in the you will see a Santa Fe 4-8-4 in the back right side of the photo.

Also at the Great Plains museum, formally Union Station in Wichita. As you can see from the photo it brought out young and old to see the engine.

Above photos by Tracy Mitchell, MMR

Special Contest for Houston

Your slightly demented (depending on who you ask) Contest Chairman has come up with something to follow last year's "Outhouse" contest.

This year's contest will be to build whatever you want. The catch is, it must fit on a peanut butter jar lid (no bigger than 3 1/2"). You can build whatever you want, in any scale you want' but it must fit on the lid and not hang off. We will have a cylinder we will slide over the model to make sure it conforms to the rules. For those of us in the larger scales, this will be a real challenge. For others like Tom Browning (Z Scale), you can almost build a layout. (Hint Tom, I didn't see a Z Scale outhouse last year so I am expecting something this year to test the judges eyes.)

Those are the basic rules and the entries will be judged with the rest of the models using the NMRA scores and LSR Rules. It can be in any category, so please let us know when you are entering that it is also in the "Houston Special" contest.

Like last year, special awards will be given out to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners based on the highest scoring models from all categories. You have plenty of time for planning and building, so lets fill the contest room again. If you have question please give me a call 979-696-8862 or email me at crlind@tamu.edu.

See you in Houston '08.

Company Store

	HO		N-Scale
Casey Lines	OUT		$ 5.00
Texas & African	$5.00		OUT
Waco Austin & Bryan	$5.00		$ 5.00
Anniversary Car 1951	OUT	per set	$35.00
Anniversary Cars 2001	OUT	per set	$35.00
ITC - Bob Clarke	$10.00	per set	$35.00
Quin Lines	$12.00		

Check your layout and be sure you have one of each *special run* Region car. If not we can take care of the shortage post haste.

Other items available

Cloth Region Patches	$5.00 each
Auto/Window Region Decal	$ .50
N Scale Nevadun Decals	$2.00 per sheet
HO&N Scale Daw Cha Southern Decals	$3.00 per sheet

Shipping

Please add $5.00 for up to 3 cars and add $1.00 for patches and decals

Eunice Linda, Dispatcher
3028 Cumberland
Waco, TX 76707-1219
254-754-5535
E-mail: jlinda@hot.rr.com

For the Narrow Minded…

By Duane Richardson, MMR

With all of the news from the convention, the *Marker Lamp* ran a little short of space, but we are back this issue for another look at unique narrow gauge places.

In researching the Westside for our last column, I got to thinking about another area were the Shay was the locomotive of choice. High up on the mountain side above Black Hawk and Central City, Colorado, 5 Shays ran on 2-foot gauge rails and for 47 years they hauled gold ore out of what became known as "The Little Kingdom of Gilpin". Our stop this time is the Gilpin Tram.

In the beginning, the Russell brothers discovered gold in the Clear Creek area in 1858. In 1859, John Gregory found gold dust on the north fork of Clear Creek. In fact, several big lodes were found that same month on Quartz Hill above Black Hawk. As with most large strikes, the population grew quickly and in just a few months it had swelled to almost 1,000. It was such a profitable area that by year's end the various camps had produced a million dollars in gold.

The summer of 1860 saw several mills and many more mines being worked by a population of 15,000 people. This gave birth to places like Nevadaville, Russell Gulch, Central, Apex and Black Hawk. It also saw Colorado's first smelter in 1867. As the gold on the surface gave way, panning for gold changed to rock mining and the use of star drills and hammers. By 1875, there were 22 stamp mills running, using 440 stamps. This increased to 770 stamps over the next year.

The Union Pacific was working with the Colorado & Clear Creek Railroad to lay track from Denver to Golden, over the Rockies and on to Salt Lake City. This plan went away as the Union Pacific decided to build through Cheyenne, WY. Instead they consolidated the railroad into the Colorado Central in 1870 and began laying track from Denver to Golden. While Jay Gould worked to extend the U.P. from Golden to Cheyenne, the Colorado Central was laying 3-foot gauge tracks to the mining camps.

By December 15, 1872, the Colorado Central had completed its line to Black Hawk. The road construction was done with 3 small Porter 0-4-0 tender locomotives and 10 flat cars. Six years later the Colorado Central reached Central City. It was in these areas that 5 mining men formed the Gilpin Tramway Company on July 29, 1886. They proposed to build a 2-foot gauge line to service the various mines. Grading on the line began in May of 1887.

With its offices in Central City and its shops in Black Hawk, the new line began with 1 Shay locomotive from Lima. The first rails were laid on July 1, 1887 in Black Hawk and the first run was a short ¾ mile run 2 months later. That same month saw the arrival of 14 ore cars from Lima. There was never a formal right-of-way as they built from mine to mine. The line would run over and through some rough terrain that made the Shay's necessary. The line had a maximum 6% grade and some 66-foot radius curves. They spiked down 35 lb rail to 4 x 4 red spruce ties. The original wooden trestles were soon replaced with stone culverts and fills. To avoid tunneling, trestles and sharp curves, they built numerous switchbacks, more than any American railroad. So numerous, in fact, 7 were needed to reach one mine alone. The high number of switchbacks did mean that they didn't see a large number of bad run-away wrecks.

The first revenue train ran on December 11, 1887 with a shipment of ore from the Grand Army shaft down to the Meade Mill. By Christmas this was a regular train. New Years 1888 found the line in Nevadaville and in March a second Shay arrived along with 6 new excursion passenger cars. By August they were operating 15 ½ miles of track.

Being at such a high altitude presented some unique problems. When ore was loaded into the cars it was usually wet. With the cold temperatures it would freeze solid in the cars making it impossible to remove. To fix this problem the railroad built a warming house by the machine shop in Black Hawk. The warming house was a stone structure where 3 tracks ran the 240-foot length of the building with a steam pipe between the rails. three stoves kept the temperature at 120 degrees and up to 30 cars could be dried overnight. The house was also built on a 2% grade to allow the cars to drop down by gravity.

The next few years brought track improvements, and new ore cars from Lima. Shay #3 arrived in January of 1890. Shay #2 wrecked after a rebuild that same year and wouldn't see service again for almost 3 years. In fact, the newly arrived #3 derailed on Quartz Hill shortly after it arrived in March.

Even with excursions being popular during the summer months, the railroad had all the dangers of mountain railroading. The line never had airbrakes or automatic couplers. Cars would, on occasion, be brought down by gravity. Most of the time this worked well, but it was very dangerous. So dangerous that on January 17, 1891, Jimmy Tabb was killed on Roundhouse Curve. His body was found amongst the wreckage with his hands frozen to the brake wheel.

Business stayed steady and the line was so important to the mines that during a couple of bad winters they would offer workers to help clear the line. Business was so good at the turn of the century that they even ran night trains down Quartz Hill. In 1900 they transported an average of 300 tons of ore per day. Even with all of that, the line didn't get its first caboose until 1904.

All of the wet ore came from even wetter mines. Drainage was always a problem for miners. Many mines ran pumps 24 hours a day to keep the tunnels from flooding. In 1904, the New House Tunnel was opened from Clear Creek to Idaho Springs. This provided drainage for the mines and it also had its own tracks that allowed ore to be brought down to the Argo Mill.

Back in January of 1899, the Denver, South Park and Pacific and the Colorado Central combined to form the Colorado Southern. In 1906, the C&S took over the operations on the Gilpin Tram. Sadly, at the same time the C&S took over, the mining began to decline. By 1914 the line was loosing $10,000 a year and by 1916, the areas 16 mills were down to 2 still in operation. The end came on January 12, 1917, when all equipment was ordered back to Black Hawk by the 15th. The last train would run on the 17th and bring down the curtain on what had once been the richest square mile on Earth.

Until next time...keep the boiler full, the fires hot and the wheels on the rails.

FUN WITH OPERATIONS

By Peter Bryan – Houston, Texas

THE FIRST TIME

From the very first experience with model trains, when I was 35 years old, I was interested in operations. I had read all the books I could get my hands on. I knew that my interest was with operations because I had no talent for wiring, electronics, scenery, etc. (And I still don't!) But, I can lay track and design operating railroads and systems.

My first railroad was on a 5'x9' ping-pong table (it was already green [did not have to do scenery!!] and had a hump in the middle that was a perfect place for my "hump yard"). The first West Virginia Western Railroad had 3 towns, 14 industries and a 3 track classification tracks.

I used this railroad to learn all I could about operations, including basic things like magnetic un-coupling ramps, car forwarding systems (playing cards, switch lists, random drawings, etc.). I used switch lists made up by hand and could have a one-hour operating session having a blast all by myself. (This was before I knew any other operators in Houston).

The next version of the WVW RR was in a 12' x 12' spare bedroom in my previous home. This was an around-the-wall design with two peninsulas and a duck-under to enter the room. It was fine for me (even with a couple of aisles of 18 inches!) and I had many hours of fun operating again by myself. I did have 3 operating sessions with two operators and knew right then and there that when I bought our new home I was going to have a big enough room to have most of my 'given and druthers' for operations. But most important was the ability to have friends over to share the operations part of the hobby with me.

With this layout, I also learned a lot about making sure I had excellent track work and switches. To this day I feel the MOST important thing you can do for an operating railroad is to have perfect track work, *and I do mean perfect.* As many of you are aware, it is no fun to be somewhere operating and continually have to re-rail cars and engines or worse still have the session stop while the owner (trainmaster) finds the cars derailed in hidden staging.

I also began to meet some guys in Houston and invited myself to their operating sessions. Just ask your local operating layout owners. Most are more than willing to take on new operators to build their pool of crewmen. Guys like Gil Freitag, Don Bozman and the late Ken Caulking gave me the incentive to have the best operating layout possible (with my meager talents.) Plus, I started to get invited to other operating weekends around the country and learned from all the layouts I visited. I always took a note pad to jot down notes. I might add that I noted the bad as well as the good at each of these railroads. Sometimes I would come home with as many as 5-6 good ideas to incorporate into the WVW RR.

LESSONS LEARNED

Have Fun and Make It Simple. The number one lesson!!

Beside excellent track work, I feel you MUST have an inviting and comfortable railroad setting. (Just like a comfortable and inviting home). Below, in no particular order, are some of the lessons I have learned. I hope you will look at these closely and take to heart some of what I have to say if you are getting started or want to improve your layout for operations.

1) Well lighted room – I am lucky in that my railroad is upstairs in two bedrooms and part of an attic (more on that later) that have natural light coming in the windows. In addition I put florescent lights all around the room to give good lighting to read car numbers. I know this makes for lousy photography, but that is not of interest to me at this time. If you are in a basement, make sure it is still well lighted.

2) Comfortable surroundings – Again I am lucky in that the rooms are fully carpeted and air-conditioned. In addition, the restrooms and crew lounge are just outside the door to the WVW. I also have a balcony overlooking our lake where the crew members can take a break. Gil Freitag helped me (actually he did all the work - I was the go-for) do the main wiring for the railroad room and he was able to have one switch that turns off all the power and another that turns off all the lights. This has been very helpful as I get older and more forgetful. (Don't laugh; it will happen to you someday!)

3) Easy to understand operating system – I looked at many ways to run the WVW from car cards to many computer generated programs. After careful study I chose RailOp. (www.railop.com) It is easy for my crews to use and very easy for me to set up an operating session. In fact, it takes me less than 15 minutes to set up and print out all that is needed for a 3-hour OP session. The beauty of RailOP, in my mind, is that if you only run part of a session (I keep my sessions to 3 hours – I don't want wives mad at me or Susan for that matter) then you simply reset the trains you did not run. That makes for an easy way to run sessions for beginners where we may not get through the whole session. And RailOP is very easy to set up. If I can do it and make it work to perfection, anyone can.

4) Easy to use control system – Of course this is DCC. I use the Wireless Easy DCC from CVP Products. It is very reliable and my crew members like the idea of walking around with out having a throttle tethered to the layout

5) Clearly marked control panels and diagrams – On my WVW RR each town (including one industry towns) have a very nicely done panel(thanks to Don Bozman) that show not only the town and main and passing track, but East /West directions and the next town or two east and west. This is very important to new operators and helps them keep in mind where east/west is on the railroad. In addition the panels have the OS turnouts with a toggle switch to throw to OS sections and an LED to indicate which track you are aligned for. I might mention at this time, I ONLY have the Tortoise slow motion switch machines wired for the main and passing siding. The rest of the railroad (except for the staging tracks) use hand throws. This not only makes for easy wiring but much less confusion on which toggle to throw for each track. The guys simply reach for the switch and throw it!

6) Town diagrams with all the industries shown – Since many of my towns are as long as 10 feet and have as many as 15 industries with up to 30 spots, I needed a way for the crew to

quickly and easily find each industry and spot. On our way to Prairie Rail in Kansas City this year we stopped at Bella Vista, Arkansas to operate on two railroads. I went to Art Cunningham's and he used laminated sheets with each town and industry clearly laid out. Most interesting, he hung the town diagrams on hooks so that the crewmember could easily lift up the sheet at a 45 degree angle for easy viewing. This is what I have done on the WVW and the guys really like it. My thanks to Tom Bailey for doing the diagrams.

7) Clipboards- Some crew members like to carry a clip board and pen with the manifest on them. This allows them to check off each set-out/pick-up as they go. I also have a schematic of the railroad attached to the front for quick and easy reference. If they don't want to use the clipboard, that is fine; they can just carry the manifest with them.

8) Use no fast clock (at least to begin) – On the WVW RR, we use a sequential list of trains. This allows the operators to have a nice, fun, easy session without the pressure of the trainmaster looking over their shoulder. If you want to run scheduled passenger trains (which I do and love as part of the operating session), just run them in sequence. This also takes the pressure off of the yard crews as they do work in real time. I have seen railroads with fast clocks that have no passenger trains, but you can't leave with your freight until, say 2PM, so you sit around for 15 minutes with nothing to do simply because it is not 2 o'clock yet!!

9) No long introductions to your railroad- I have been to some railroads where the owner will spend anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour explaining the railroad. First of all, since I have never seen your railroad, I will not remember all the jobs and nuances that you have mentioned. If I am an experienced crew member, I will be very bored! I simply explain the throttle, the jobs and let them go to it. That is the way they learn. Of course, make sure you are available to answer any questions.

10) Avoid letting one guy hog the best job – The way I combat this is to use Clue (the game) pieces and draw for jobs. I have seen other owners draw numbers for seniority that also works very well.

11) Put crews to work immediately – You have people that sometimes have traveled many miles, spent a lot of dollars and have come to OPERATE on your railroad. By golly, put them to work!! If they want to take a break that is fine, but at least give them the chance to operate to their hearts content. On my WVW RR, I have three permanent jobs that take care of 3 people right away. For the other 5 crew members, I have 5 trains ready to go. Three of these trains are in staging. These staged trains work across the entire railroad so that for any new guys (or gals) they can get a first hand look at all the towns on the railroad and the staging at each end. The other two are locals that start at each end of the railroad and work across the whole railroad also. This also allows the yard crews to get oriented and started the building of their first one or two trains before someone shows up looking for the next train out of the yard.

12) Use many different road names (reporting marks) on your cars- I know for you prototypical operators, this will not work, but for my generic WVW RR, (although it is based loosely on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad around Huntington, W.Va.) it allows us that don't see as well as we used to , to simply look for the reporting marks and not have to read each car number. Bill Wright, (an OP SIG Director here in Houston) uses RailOP also, but even with a field for 330 reporting marks in RAILOP, he ran out of room!! The developer of RAILOP (Phil Chamberlain) came back with a field of 33,000 reporting marks for Bill.

13) Questionnaire- For my first 20-25 op sessions, I asked each new operator to complete a questionnaire on how the railroad ran and what changes they would make, did they have fun, etc. This was very helpful to me in making the railroad operate even better. I still use the questionnaire for out of town operators as they may give me a new perspective and fresh ideas.

14) Wide aisles – I know you hear this all the time, but it cannot be emphasized enough. After I got the general bench work idea from Richard Day in Richardson, TX, then I started building the WVW RR with Don Bozman (who was here every week for 8-10 hours doing all the bench work and most of the electrical and electronics). When we were getting ready to expand the peninsula another 3 feet from its temporary location, my wife Susan came upstairs and said "no way!!" I asked why and she said she had been in too many railroads where she felt like she was in a "dark closed-in closet" and did not like it one bit. So we stayed where we were with the peninsula and now we have a good 6 feet of open space right where the most traffic is. This has worked great and I thank Susan every operating session. In addition, this space allows a place for people to congregate during our open houses. I might add that the WVW had its first OP session 11 months after we started construction.

15) Guest Book – Of course we all have guest books, It is fun to look back and see where your guest are from and who the "famous" people are that have been to your railroad. But I use mine during open houses for another very important reason. At the top of my guest book, I put "If you are interested in operating on the WVW RR OR want to learn to operate in general, please leave your phone number and I will contact you for an OP session" This has worked very well as I try to have at least one new operator at each session. Some of these guys have never had a throttle in their hand! So far there have been at least 20 guys that have never operated on a railroad come to my RR. I am very proud of this. In fact, one time after one session on my railroad, a guy tore his old railroad down and is now building it for operations. An interesting side story about the guest book on Gil Freitag's Stony Creek & Western: Gil's first Open House was in 1963 and a person by the name of Roy Pickard signed his book. Well 32 years later, I took Gil to Roy's fabulous Live Steam Railroad in Comanche, TX named The Comanche & Indian Gap Railroad (see July 1997 Model Railroader and July 1997 [summer] issue of The Dispatchers Office) and both realized at the same time that the last time they had seen each other was in 1963 at Gil's railroad. Talk about a nice memory.

16) Staging tracks – I know you've heard all the talk about having enough staging. Well believe me, it is true. You can never have enough. But maybe an even more important feature is a way to turn trains after an OP session. You do not want to spend 8 hours to re-stage your railroad. There are a few railroads out there that do take that long and at some point you decide "oh heck, I won't have a session tonight because I do not want to spend all day in the railroad room." Fortunately

with the help of Don Bozman, I have reverse loops at all my staging yards that allow me to re-stage all 11 of my staged trains in about a ½ hour. Believe me that is huge. Of course, if you have the room to have loop or serial staging that is even better. Your staging tracks should have some kind of detection or TV screens if the area is hidden. This will save you many headaches in the future.

17) Information - A one-pager for the railroad – I have made a simple one-page outline for the WVW RR. It basically gives all the pertinent information that an operator might need. I also have a more extensive 4 pager that gives a lot more detail for the railroad for anyone that is interested. I sometimes will send this information out to the operators that are coming in from out of town and this is their first visit to the railroad.

Well, that about does it for my tips to get a great operating railroad. Now let's go to the railroad itself and see what the West Virginia Western is all about.

The WVW RR is loosely based on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad around Huntington, West Virginia (my hometown). The time is from 1937 to 1957. This allows me to run with steam and heavyweight passenger cars of the original George Washington that ran between Cincinnati and Washington, D.C/New York City. Huntington is the division point for the WVW and all trains that originate there are turns (they go out east or west to the end of the division and return to Huntington). Huntington has complete yard and engine faculties. There is the main and passing tracks along with 2 arrival/departure tracks that hold up to 16 cars each. I have a 7 track class yard tracks that holds 66 cars. Most important the class tracks have there own drill track that allows the Yardmaster to build a 16 car train without interfering with the other tracks in the yard.

Five of the tracks in the yard are double-ended so there are lots of places for the switch crew to get from one end of the yard or the other. At some OP sessions I have seen as many as 4 trains in Huntington at once. I love to do that to the Yardmaster when I am dispatcher!

There is also a 2-track coach yard and one commissary track for my passenger equipment. The engine facility will hold 6 engines and I also have 5 spots for coal, supplies, sand, oil, etc. This just gives me more switching along with 2 other industries and a RIP track in Huntington to switch. My thanks go to David Milton for designing the Yard complex. I have been very happy with it as have my operators. In fact, the Huntington Yardmaster Job is one of the most desirable jobs on the WVW.

The WVW is an East/West railroad and all the fascias are clearly marked which way is which. Since I like lots of switching, each of the 7 major towns on the railroad has extensive industry areas. Each town also has a station track for the setting out of the passenger cars. One of the towns, East Huntington, is like its own little branch line/industrial area. When you switch that job you are off the dispatched part of the railroad. Many times I will assign that job to a new operator and then he feels no pressure to get the job done and he can be left all to his lonesome.

JOBS ON THE WVW

Trainmaster – usually me but sometimes Rick White will help. Since the railroad now runs so smoothly, (in 3 years I have had over 100 OP sessions- told you I liked to operate) this is really a very simple job. In fact, many times I will also run trains right along with the rest of the guys. If we do have new operators, then I will stay as TM for the whole session.

Dispatcher – This is an optional job on the RR. I have a metal schematic of the railroad with train markers and if someone wants, they can dispatch. It is a popular job during the spring and fall when they can sit on the balcony and watch the water and ducks. I use FRS radios. They are so cheap now that I use a radio at each town. I do like the telephone systems a lot of guys have, but I will not do that in the foreseeable future.

Huntington Yardmaster – This is one of my favorite jobs. He is responsible for a number of activities in the yard. What he DOES NOT do is classify trains. That job will be described next. The YM is engine hostler, helper engine, local switcher, and adds/removes blocks of cars on the thru freights and passenger cars on the passenger trains. He is the boss of the Dog.

Huntington Dog – His main job is to classify cars per the RailOP switch list. And any other duties the YM asks of him. He will usually help the YM with the passenger trains, as we want to get them in and out of town ASAP.

Kenova Operator – This is the most requested permanent job on the RR. He has the whole town of Kenova and operates his town within yard limits. He has 15 industries and 30 spots to switch each session. He may also have some local moves (intra-town moves). He sometimes will move as many as 35 cars in a session. He also is responsible for the switching in and out of head-end cars on the three passenger trains that pass through Kenova. A very busy job and it keeps you on your feet the whole session. But it is a blast.

Local Crews – There are 5 local crews and they run in sequential order the way freights, locals, passenger trains, coal drags, tank trains, reefer trains, thru freights, etc. Every train on the WVW has some switching to do. This makes for a lot of fun for all the crews and they don't get stuck with a boring train. With sequential trains, it also allows the operators to take a break whenever they feel like it.

TRAINS ON THE WVW RR

Locals and wayfreights – these are the heavy duty switching trains. Two of the trains start (at the beginning of the session as mentioned above) at each end of the railroad and work all the towns from end to end. By the end of their run these trains can have switched as many as 20-25 cars and take anywhere from ½ hour to one hour to complete.

Passenger Trains – I have 5 passenger trains for the OP session. Each of them has some switching to do. They do all their own switching in all towns except Huntington and Kenova where the local crews do the switching for them. WVW Union rules do not allow passenger engineers to switch when there is a local crew available.

Through Freights – These run from staging to staging and only drop/pick up blocks of cars at Huntington.

Coal Train and Coal Drag – These trains also run from staging to staging and switch the coal mines and pick up loads and drop empty hopper cars.

Tank Train and Reefer Train – These trains will switch out cars at interchange tracks in each of the towns. All their moves are trailing point moves.

Special Trains - This is a little different than other special trains. About every 3-4 sessions, Susan will come upstairs to the OP session and announce, as President and CEO, that she needs to

tour the railroad. In Huntington Yard at the commissary is the business car "Susan." The yard crew will either put together a special train or add Susan to the next way freight or passenger train leaving Huntington. It will be delivered to whatever town she wants to go to. Later in the session, the trainmaster will arrange to deliver it back to Huntington.

Well that's about it for my take on having fun with operations. If you would like to contact me or run the railroad, please feel free to do so. Peter Bryan 713-939-8002 or peterb@pdq.net .

The Mount Washington Cog Railroad making the final run to the summit. No couplers are used the engine just pushes the car. On the way down twin brake wheels control the car down the grade.

FROM THE PAST (Fall 1982)

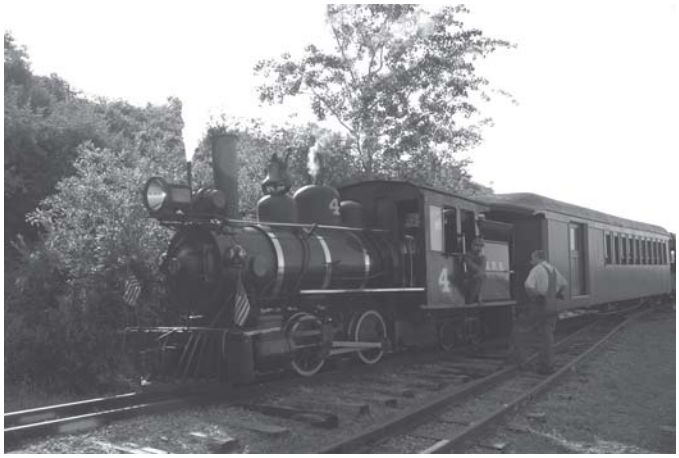
By Jim Long, MMR LSR Historian

Ken Caulking reports that on a recent hot and humid August Friday in Houston, the compressor in his and Angie's central air conditioning system failed. Apparently, Murphy's Law says, that such mechanical problems must only happen on Friday. Our repairman quickly diagnosed the problem, but "I can't get the necessary parts 'till Monday, so tough it out over the weekend. After a very restless and uncomfortable Friday night, we began to search for alternatives and suddenly realized another use for our CASEY LINES air conditioned depot in the back yard. We placed a cot in the aisle on either side of Gulf Yard. We enjoyed cool comfort over the weekend as Angie watched TV, read and otherwise busied herself while I enjoyed a field day of trackwork, wiring, regauging wheels, and train running.

What's happened to the Cape Able and Port Entous Railroad? Has it merged with another model railroad and been swallowed up by a "Jay Gould" of the Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex? Has another railroader suddenly decided that the "idiot box" offers the pleasure and relaxation he has been seeking? "NOT ON YOUR LIFE!" reports Jack Leming of Dallas. "The CA & PE was physically moved from the Glen Lakes address to a new address of 4307 Royal Ridge. My wife Helen gained an indoor studio to do her art work. I was hoping to gain an indoor room free from dust, heat, cold, humidity, and JUNE BUGS. Helen got her room, but I did not, so the railroad must again be in the garage (Oh, no! Here come the JUNE BUGS!)."

The San Jacinto Model Railroad Club in Houston has a new President, Cecil Stewart and a new Vice President, Ron Burns with Don Bozman, heading up the Secretary-Treasurer position. Ben & Irene Pearlman are the proud parents of a new caboose, Sari (glad that's over).

News has it that the Marker Lamp Editor, Homer Fleicher, is minus one gall bladder now and coming back to life after being out like a light for several days. Yes, your ole editor (old he is) had to delay a Tulsa trip and have it done. He did work, somewhat, on his Kaatskill Valley & Western layout, but has a long way to go (still dreams a lot, but dreaming doesn't get the job done).



The Maine Narrow Gauge Museun in Portland. Here you can see the small size of the 2 foot gauge and engineer and brakeman talk things over. The ride runs along the bay giving a great ride and view. Plans are under way to expand the line back into the downtown area.

The ride on the WW&F give you a wonderful trip back in time behind this 2 foot gauge Forney. This was a former Louisiana 30" gauge plantation engine that they rebuilt and narrowed.

Photos by Chuck Lind, MMR

LADIES ONLY!
Petticoat Junction

My Hobby

By Laurie Lind

Many of times people say to me…."Laurie, so Chuck's hobby is trains. What is your hobby?"

Well, after much thought, I have narrowed my hobby down to a simple answer…"My hobby is my hubby!"

Now don't go saying that is selfish on his part, because that just means my hobby has many facets (one of which happens to be trains).

Let's talk about trains. Because Chuck loves his trains, we get to travel around the country.

Just this year, we have made several trips to the Austin/Round Rock area in planning and attending the Hill Country Special Lone Star Region annual convention. What fun that was and what wonderful people I got to meet and learn to call my friends. The members of the Non-Rail Committee are both new friends and friends from the past Donna Alston, Dale Ann Angenend, Karen Wilson, Joanne Belsley…..what a wonderful, talented team. Not enough can be said for the friends (new and old timers) that attended the meeting. We made necklaces (with Patti Bullard), learned about quilts (with Barbara Barnett), fashioned Chrismon ornaments (with Carol Linda), created beautiful cards (with Donna Alston teaching us quilling and Sue Alston showing us advanced cutting and pasting), learned how to make wonderful Christmas baskets and quick and simple craft projects (with Charlotte Schneider), and we learned more than we ever knew there was to know about the Harvey Girls (with Joanne Belsley, myself, and Judy Garland). And, as usual, we had an awesome "shopping" trip…this year to Salado.

Also, we travelled east to Long Leaf, Louisiana to visit the Southern Forest Railroad Museum. In the last ten years I am amazed how a little side trip (because of Chuck having car trouble going to see trains) has created such an important part of our lives. We have shared photos and our passion for restoring the saw mill with not only other train/logging people, but also with "normal" people. Our family not only knows the way to Long Leaf, but also can show you the way to the "ghost train" lost in the woods.

We also travelled to Chama, New Mexico to ride the moonlight dinner train. I have grown to enjoy the town of Chama as much as Chuck enjoys the Cumbres and Toltec Railroad. The people of Chama welcome visitors and really know how to make you feel special. They know how to put on a wonderful Christmas party for both young and old.

In August, we attended the National Narrow Gauge Convention meeting in Portland, Maine. What a wonderful time! While Chuck was in meetings, I not only was able to visit with other "train widows" travelling on water (the Duck Tour of the harbor and the ferry ride to the Lobster Boil), by highway (the bus tour of Kennybuck Port, including the monastery), and by rail (on the 2-foot Portland, Maine Railroad museum). Also, while in Portland, I was able to wander through the city on foot to visit New England neighborhoods, wonderful churches, musty used book shops, and, oh yes, interesting antique shops.

While the train meetings are great fun, the trips to "see trains" are even more fun. On the way to Maine, we took the scenic route through New Hampshire (to visit Mount Washington) and Massachusetts (to visit Old Sturbridge Village and the Hancock Shaker Village). Of course, the trip to Mount Washington was to see and ride a train. It was awesome. The cog railroad took us up on the mountain where we could see for miles…..as long as you were weighted down so you wouldn't blow off the mountain. (I understand it is the windiest place around!) While Old Sturbridge Village was great (sort of a small Williamsburg, complete with a water-powered saw mill), I can't say enough about Hancock Shaker Village. I wish we had been able to spend much more time there. From the round barn to the water-powered grist mill to the kitchen and gardening areas…what a wonderful restoration!

Yes, I am happy with my hobby (my hubby), whose hobby (trains) takes us all over the country and gives us the chance for fellowship with new and old friends and the opportunity to see new and old sights.

Next year, Houston, Portland, Oregon and I am sure another trip to Colorado, and who know what other trips will be planned.

Remember ALL Non-Rails this is ***your*** *column. Please submit articles, receipes and other articles of interest to Virginia Freitag, LSR Non-Rail Chair.*

Have you started your Arts and Craft Project yet?

Youth Alert!

By Tom Browning, LSR Youth Chair

As we head into winter and 2008 enlisting young people into our hobby and the National Model Railroad Association becomes more and more important to extend our legacy.

At the mid-year Board of Director's meeting in January, youth membership nominations are presented for approval. Each one of us should make a concerted effort to find a youth in our respective Divisions and get the Division Director to nominate that youth for a free, one-year membership to the NMRA. The benefits to the youth are many and obvious and the benefits to the NMRA/LSR are that of giving our youth the opportunity to learn what we all have found to be such a wonderful hobby. To become familiar with the specific rules of nominating a youth, please visit the LSR website at http://www.lonestarregion.com/officers.html and click on the "By-Laws" then read Article VI. Contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

by Elbert Smith

LSR Financial Accounts:
For the period of July 1 through September 30, 2007:

Beginning Checking Account	$2,985.11
Vanguard Money Market Accts Total	$39,506.12
Funds Held For Div. 1 (Not LSR Funds)	$ 1,503.45
Total LSR Net Worth – All Accounts	$40,987.78

Income

Ad, Dealer	20.00
Ad, Pike	88.00
Adjustment – Bank Error	.04
Car & Decal Sales	243.50
NMRA Region Rebate	855.25
Subscription	6.00
Vanguard MM (CD Fund)	317.10
Vanguard MM (Convention Fund)	131.23
Vanguard MM (Life Fund)	64.85
Subtotal	$1725.97

Disbursements

Board Meetings	7.58
Contest	38.32
Election	17.67
Marker Lamp Print & Mail	1,246.19
Postage (Forever Stamps)	43.79
Web Site	49.50
Youth Program	16.00
Subtotal	$1,320.55

Ending Checking Account $3,292.03

Vanguard Money Market Accounts Total	$39,506.12
Funds Held For Div. 1 (Not LSR Funds)	$1,503.45
Total LSR Net Worth – All Accounts	$41,294.70

Total NMRA/LSR Membership inside the LSR area is 1061.

New Members – Please take note of the following members new to the NMRA/LSR. When you run into them, say hello, and invite them to attend your Division's activities.
Paul Leonard, Colleyville, TX
Richard Zamudio, Killeen, TX
John Mills, Reserve, LA
Dave Cornell, Plano, TX
Bernard Burk, Round Rock, TX
Dave Dudish, Austin, TX
Marvin Durrenberger, Georgetown, TX
Keith Kaiser, Buda, TX
George Kisor, Georgetown, TX
Cleo Whitsell, Kilgore, TX
Rayana Martinez, Pasadena, TX
Robert Sandhaas, Houston, TX
Michael Swanson, Orange, TX
Frank Hengels, Granbury, TX
John Coiron, Metairie, LA
Scott Stephenson, Levelland, TX
Joe McAvoy, Naples, TX
David Bowlby, Porter, TX
John Chaisson, Mandeville, LA
L Di Martino, Metairie, LA
Kurt Hampton, Jefferson, LA
Albert Landry, Donaldsonville, LA
William Morris, La Place, LA
Guy Allen, Greenville, TX
Craig Cooper, Plano, TX
Frank Houzvicka, San Antonio, TX
David Colvin, Shreveport, LA

Cowcatcher Division 1

by Chris Atkins

Hi all, I hope cooler weather has reached you by the time you read this. We've has a busy fall here in the Cowcatcher Division. The August meeting got pushed to the Labor Day weekend due to a couple schedule conflicts. However, we had one of the best turnouts to date. Mike Ross brought seven boxes of slides that he took while stationed while serving as a Navy medical officer in the early 1970s. He shared his railroad photos from several counties including Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan and Australia and others. There was still a fair amount of American steam active in this part of the world at that time. I think the highlight of the show were photos Mike took while riding a narrow gauge logging line in the mountains of Taiwan; complete with Lima shays!

A group of Division 1 members made the annual trip to Colorado in September to attend the Rocky Op operating weekend. In addition to the excellent host layouts, there was a special excursion to the Greeley Freight Station Museum in Greeley, CO. www.gfsm.org. The museum layout is the dream of local Greeley newspaper publisher Dave Trussell who is funding the 1.5 million dollar project. If you get a chance to visit this layout, please do. The photos on the website don't do this layout justice. The scale of the layout is just amazing. Also, this layout is being built to operate and they already have the layout fully signaled with a working CTC machine.

Speaking of operating, many of us in Division 1 are gearing up to host friends from Houston, Tulsa and across the region at this year's Dallas / Ft. Worth Interchange. This year we will have 17 layouts on the interchange and host around 50 out of town guest operators. Three of the largest layouts are in Division 1: LMRA's club layout, Jim Norwood's KCS, and Shane Murphy's Katy/T&P.

The LMRA hosted their 25th annual train show at their facility in Ft. Worth. Their club did an outstanding job as always and this show continues to be one of my favorites because of its strong mix of dealer and personal tables. I'd like to thank the folks that helped the division out by talking to potential members at the NMRA/LSR table. We'll do it again in November.

Speaking of which, the annual Ft. Worth show is November 10-11, 2007 at the Amon Carter Exhibit Hall at the Will Rogers Memorial Center. I am looking for Division 1 members to help out at the show. We need folks to man the tables and to work the show. If you can help, drop me an email: chris@railroadmodelers.com.

Also on November 17th, the division will have its quarterly meeting. This time we are going to break from the normal and visit two excellent O scale layouts. We will still meet at 10AM at the LMRA administration building (3400 Bryant Irvin Rd) but we will split into two groups. One group will travel to Mike Ross' to visit his layout, while the other group will go to Mike Walter's. Then we'll switch.

I hope to see you all there.

Bayou Division 2

by Jack Green

Dateline: Round Rock. Another great convention has been placed in the Archives of the LSR. I gave this one a thumbs up for variety, clinics, layouts and "other miscellaneous" activities. Bob and crew, fine job! We were just returning from a motor home trip up the west side of the Rockies to Banff, Canada and then back down the east side to Round Rock. We had ridden 4 trains prior to boarding the "Hill Country Special" that was a great way to finish our train trips.

I was in such a "Convention Mood" that Dick Schneider, Rod Fredericks and I went to Detroit to National. Considering all the bad publicity about Detroit, we found that city to be very enjoyable. Our main purpose was to meet some of the movers and shakers in the signal world and we did. Bruce Chubb of CMRI and Bob Jacobson of JMRI provided the expertise and guidance to embark on our undertaking for the Midsouth. With over 100 signals made at a cost of less than 9 dollars we are ready to tackle the software angle. Let me point out that the National contest room does not even come close to our own LSR contest room. We could show the nation a thing or two. Even the number of entrants was higher. The LSR has some very talented craftsmen.

The enclosed picture shows 4 eager operators on a recent Op session at the Crescent Club in New Orleans. L to R: John

Coiron, president of the club. Jim Lofland from Baton Rouge. Lou Schultz and Walter Rieger from Covington. They were getting a briefing from Mike Poche, not shown, the operations honcho of the club. Block control was used during the first part of the session and then John hooked up his NCE system to Block One and it performed like expected. Re-wiring is under way for the complete incorporation of DCC. It will be a long and tedious process but well worth the effort. RailOp was the manifest during that session and Lou kept asking for an apron and fist full of cards so he could drop them on the floor and really have "random car cards".

North East Texas Division 3

by Duane Richardson, MMR

It's Fall! Not that you can tell from the 90 degree heat but it's quickly coming up on the train show season. By the time you read this the Ft. Worth show will be right around the corner. The show will be at Amon Carter again on November 10th & 11th. Plano will host the show in January as usual at the Plano Centre January 19th & 20th. Divisions 1 and 3 have some hours to fill at these shows so if you would like to volunteer to help out we would appreciate it.

It's business as usual in Division 3. The monthly meetings go on. We had a very nice clinic on carving blue foam for scenery given by Don Culbertson. He had just given this clinic at this year's National Narrow Gauge Convention and was kind enough to do it again for us. The October meeting featured a Railfanning clinic given by Tom Browning and Rocky Jackson. It is amazing how much train activity is going on around us if we just pay a little extra attention along the way.

We won't be holding a meeting in November. The library has a scheduled event on our usual day and the weekend before is the Ft. Worth Train Show. Since the week after is the Thanksgiving we decided to wait until December. We will hold the December meeting at its regular time and place. For that meeting our LSR President, Jerry Schoenberg, MMR will be giving a presentation on how he built his layout. Many thanks to Jerry for putting up with the clinic shuffle. We are also planning a question and answer session for anybody and everybody who has a problem with their trains. We are going to advertise this at the local train shop in hopes of bringing in some of the "Train around the tree" holiday only modelers. If you know somebody new to the hobby please bring them along…every month.

And now for the usual comments…If you have a clinic you would like to see or would be interested in sharing your knowledge, PLEASE let me know. Bring along your current project or newest purchase for some show and tell.

Lastly, we are sending out at least 2 emails a month to all Division 3 members. If you haven't been getting these please send me an email at duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com or Tom Browning at tom@texaszrails.com so I can update not only our records but the LSR's and the NMRA's as well.

I hope to see you all at the next meeting and hope you all have a safe and happy holiday season.

Cen-Tex Division 4

by Bob Alson, Jr.

Thanks to everyone that came to the Hill Country Special last June. I normally would have said that in the last report,

but in my effort to start dealing with everything I had been putting off to work on the convention, I missed the deadline. It may also have been a mental issue too! We did have a great time with all of the non-stop fun and events that were planned. I believe that ever person that attended felt like it was worth their time. So if you didn't make it this time, mark your calendars for 6 years from now, and be sure to make it.

I want to mention a special thank you to all of my committee members. You all were a pleasure to work with. There was only constructive evaluation given and everyone used their creativity to make things come off nearly flawlessly. The success of the HCS was due to all of you guys and ladies that labored with great diligence. THANK YOU!

This is the season in Div. 4 that our Train Shows occur. For the first time in 15 years, I missed the Temple show, but the LSR had ample representation from its membership. I have it on good source that the 25th anniversary event was a raging success and everyone had a big time. By the time you read this, the Austin Jamboree will be history. I will have given my "Installing DCC Decoders in Locos Without Plugs" clinic and hopefully will have railed several new NMRA/LSR members too. I will also have seen several great Austin area home layouts and visited a while with new and old friends. I'd say that is a great day of railroadin'.

Division 5

by Dave Lamberts

Division 5 continues its project with the Lubbock Science Spectrum involving teaching kids about model railroading. We have decided to divide the sessions into five parts as follows:

Session Two	Laying and ballasting track and building rolling stock
Session Three	Structures
Session Four	Scenery
Session Five	Scenery, finish details, run trains, award prizes.

The format is the popular T-Track Module system, adapted here for HO scale.

The wood for the modules (Session One) was all pre cut to proper shape by one of our club members so the students do not need to do any sawing. The age group is six to 12 plus one adult. For our first effort, we are limiting the attendance to 12 students with 12 adults. The first session is scheduled for October 20 (Saturday) morning from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

If this project works out well, I will make a formal presentation to the board at our winter meeting. A lot of "homework" has gone into this project, and if it is successful, I will provide all the necessary written material to the board for dissemination to other divisions.

Division 6

by Fred Bock, MMR

If you haven't heard much from me lately, especially after an aggressive first two months as your Division Director, there's a reason. I had a heart attack, congestive heart failure, and quintuple bypass surgery during first week of February. I've spent most of the time since then recovering (I'm doing well). The surgery is the closest thing to "kitbashing" on myself I've experienced in quite a while! Then, right after the LSR Convention, I got a "DCC decoder" installed in my chest – well, it feels like a G-scale decoder, anyway, and is controlled by a wireless base station! I just have to keep "real" DCC wireless throttles away from it.

The past six months have seen a whole series of train shows, all of which were considered successful by their sponsors. **SAMRA** had it's usual end-of-January show, and **New Braunfels** likewise in April. Then there was the SAMRA summer Crossroads Mall show in San Antonio, a semi-private show in New Braunfels, and the just completed **Alamo Model Railroad Engineers** (AMRE) show this past weekend. Many of the "usual suspects" exhibited at one or more of the shows: the **Gulf & Western Modular Railroad Society** (HO – Corpus Christi), **San Antonio N-Trak** (SANTRAK), the **San Antonio Garden Railway Society** (SAGRES), and the rapidly-growing **Hill Country On30 Outlaws** and their FREMO-like modular railroad. It was good to see Dave Doege's fine modular HO railroad at the **AMRE** show this past weekend. Several folks made some observations about the shows that seem to ring true. There seems to have been a gradual decline in attendance over the past several years, both with the visiting public and in vendors who decide to exhibit their products. On the other hand, as the space has not been filled with vendors, there have been more layouts exhibited . . . and an increasing number of show-goers with small children is making up a growing segment of the attendees. Shows are one of the principal ways folks get exposed to our hobby. How can we maintain operating revenues derived from the shows by their sponsors, and yet continue to attract and involve an increasing proportion of attendees interested in participating? That's one of the questions to ponder for the future.

And now for news of the world – or at least that piece of it in Division 6.

Congratulations are in order for SAMRA member **Ernie Kaak**, who has been a member of SAMRA continuously for 50 years. Not too many folks can make that claim. Ernie was honored at the SAMRA August meeting with a cake and a variety of tributes and sentiments.

Sharon and Joe Mainz, one of SAMRA's husband-and-wife modeling teams, just had their beautiful SP-Flatonia Junction layout published in *the 2008 Great Model Railroads* by Kalmbach. Their world-class class-act has been an unpublicized gem in the San Antonio model railroading community. Sharon and Joe are finally getting the recognition they so richly deserve.

One of the things I keep my eyes out for are venues in which one or more of our modular pikes can be set up and

run for a while (like, weeks or months). One small success recently is an agreement between the Texas Transportation Museum and SANTRAK. During TTM's "Santa's Railroad Wonderland" holiday event in December, SANTRAK will set up and operate an N-scale T-trak layout in the freight room of TTM's "Longhorn Depot". (Which is actually the old SP Converse station, moved by trailer just ahead of the SP wrecking crews and now serves as a visitor center at TTM). There is at least some interest on the part of both parties on finding ways to get a bigger space for a longer-term N-trak display, but at this point it's mostly in the "visioning" stage.

TTM also had their 1:1-scale Baldwin 0-4-0s boiler pass its FRA inspection. With luck, a year from now there will be a steam locomotive on the point of their tourist ride.

TTM Executive Director Hugh Hemphill recently had his book, "A History of Railroads in San Antonio and South Texas", reviewed favorably by Dr. Gilbert Cruz, retired professor of Southwestern history, in the *Journal of South Texas History.*

Since the next issue of "The Marker Lamp" won't be out until the end of January, let me wish you all a Happy Halloween, a joyful Thanksgiving, meaningful Chanukah, Christmas, and Kwanza holidays, bargain-filled after Christmas sales, and a Happy New Year. Don't forget TTM's "Santa's Railroad Wonderland" in December, and the SAMRA show the last weekend of January. Until next time, then, if there's news of your club or layout, please let me know so we can share it around the Division. . . and remember: ***"Don't Just Belong . . . Participate!"***

Division 7

by Don Kimmell

Greetings from North Louisiana. I hope everyone has had a "cool" summer. We were a bit hot around here, and the fall is staying the same.

First off, I want everyone to know that the JETTS Longview Show is now the LAST weekend in February. They moved it forward one weekend to avoid a scheduling conflict to ensure the great Vendors could make it. So again, the LAST weekend in February 2008.

Now what has been going on around here, well by the time you read this, the T&P Marshall Show and the Northwest Louisiana Train show will be history, I hope to have a report on these fine shows in my next report.

It so far has been a busy early fall. The ArkLaTex crew has traveled to both Temple and FtWorth for those shows, and they both were Great!! It seems that this was the 25th year for each show, and they just keeping getting better!! The CentraMod folks threw a wonderful bash, and we all had a great time, plus got some neat presents! The location for the banquet was super—the restored Santa Fe station—if you are ever in that neck of the woods-actually I guess it should be hills—please take the time to visit it. Having supper, while the BNSF is working just outside the windows is neat. A good time was had by all.

Not to be outdone, the LMRA also celebrated their 25th, and they did a great job, Bob Bray, Jim Howard-who by the way runs a pretty mean snack bar—Jim Packer, and this other "big" guy outdid themselves this year! Aside from a great selection of vendors, 4 modular layouts and a great group of Circus Train folks, they have just about finished their club layout! Fun and what they are planning for next year is mind boggling! Please make sure you plan on attending it in 08'. We had a great time, food was good, people were friendly, so don't miss this one in 08'.

By the way, the attendance at both shows was up this year, a wonderful thing, and you should have seen the kids going after "Thomas". It bodes well for the hobby in years to come.

I just got back last night from that show, so this may not make a whole lot of sense, but our Prez, want us all to keep Chuck happy, and get the reports in on time. So here it is, Now I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and go PLAY TRAINS.

Texas Gulf Division 8

by Ray Byer

This year's end of the year report is good.

The Division has picked up about 10 new members for the year, it has also fixed the constitution to bring the division in line with the national guidelines. We now have the WAYBILL online and is being sent out by e mail to all members who have e mail, or by US mail to those that chose not to and are willing to pay postage. The Division has also started doing the "Modeling with the Division 8 Master Model Railroader" clinics. These programs have been well attended and give a lot of information on different areas of modeling. The Division had their Annual Meeting and picnic at Zube Park hosted by Houston Area Live Steamers. The smell of coal smoke, cool weather, and deep fried turkey can makes for a great day.

Next year's convention plans for 08 in Houston are well under way. Plans are running at full speed ahead. I hope all of you are making plans to attend the convention in 08.

What a year. This year has been fun, with all the different thing going on. Thanks to all the Division 8 MMR who have helped with the Modeling with the Division 8 Master Model Railroader programs. And special thanks to all the Division 8 members who make this hobby fun.

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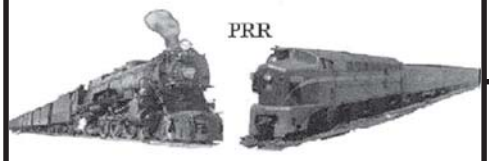
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